

DEPARTMENT OF WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT
Secretary Roberta Gassman
201 East Washington Avenue
P.O. Box 7946
Madison, WI 53707-7946
Telephone: (608) 266-7552
FAX: (608) 266-1784
www.dwd.state.wi.us



**State of Wisconsin
Governor Jim Doyle**

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND
FAMILY SERVICES
Secretary Helene Nelson
1 West Wilson Street
P.O. Box 7850
Madison, WI 53707-7850
Telephone: (608) 266-9622
FAX: (608) 266-7882
www.dhfs.wisconsin.gov

**TO: Economic Support Supervisors
Economic Support Lead Workers
Training Staff
Child Care Coordinators
W-2 Agencies
Workforce Development Boards
Job Center Leads and Managers**

**FROM: Amy Mendel-Clemens
Technical Assistance, Training and
Education
Bureau of Health Care Eligibility
Division of Health Care Financing**

BHCE/BWP OPERATIONS MEMO

No: 05-38

DATE: 9/27/2005

FS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	MA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
CTS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	CC	<input type="checkbox"/>	W-2	<input type="checkbox"/>
FSET	<input type="checkbox"/>	EA	<input type="checkbox"/>	CF	<input type="checkbox"/>
JAL	<input type="checkbox"/>	JC	<input type="checkbox"/>	RAP	<input type="checkbox"/>
WIA	<input type="checkbox"/>	WtW	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Other EP	<input type="checkbox"/>	★			

PRIORITY: HIGH

SUBJECT: ACCESS "Check My Benefits" Tool

CROSS REFERENCE: Operations Memo 04-40 and 04-63

EFFECTIVE DATE: September 30, 2005

PURPOSE

This memo outlines the addition of the "Check My Benefits" tool to the [ACCESS](#) website. Check My Benefits allows recipients of FoodShare (FS), Medicaid (MA), SeniorCare (SC) and the SSI Caretaker Supplement (CTS) to create a secure account and check the status of their benefits. It also outlines the process by which any worker, with a valid WAMS ID and access to the CARES Worker Web (CWW), will also be able to log in and view Check My Benefits screens for a recipient who has created an ACCESS account.

The Check My Benefits tool is designed to improve customer service by giving customers an effective tool for managing their benefits. It is also designed to ease workload for local agencies by giving customers a way to get benefit information without calling their worker.

BACKGROUND

In 2003, the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS) secured a grant from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to develop and implement Internet-based access tools for FS, MA, and other services and benefits. The project is designed to increase the consumer awareness of potential eligibility for FS and other nutrition and health care programs, improve customer service, and improve the quality of applications submitted to local agencies.

In August of 2004, DHFS implemented the [ACCESS](#) self-assessment tool. This web-based tool, allows Wisconsin residents to assess their potential eligibility for a number of assistance programs. For more information about the ACCESS self-assessment tool, refer to Operations Memos 04-40 and 04-63.

The next phase, the Check My Benefits tool, is designed to help applicants and recipients manage and maintain their benefits by providing basic information about benefit status, review dates, denial reasons, and other answers to common questions about benefits. It is an optional tool for recipients, and it does not replace notices or other formal means of communication.

In creating the Check My Benefits tool, we conducted over 25 focus groups with workers, supervisors, service providers and low-income residents to find out the types of questions recipients have about their benefits. We have also sought input on text and screen design from these end-users throughout the development process for Check My Benefits.

CARES CHANGES

No visible changes will be made in CARES or the CWW. However, data will be extracted from CARES and be visible to customers via the ACCESS Check My Benefits view.

All information that appears in Check My Benefits is based directly on data from CARES. An individual's case data will be extracted from CARES when a customer first creates an ACCESS account. After the initial extract, data will then be extracted as part of a nightly batch process. An individual's information can be extracted from CARES as soon as it becomes an RFA, although a person cannot see detailed information until the RFA becomes a case.

Once a customer has established an ACCESS account, workers will also be able to access this view of the customer's benefits. From ACCESS, the worker can log into Check My Benefits using his/her WAMS ID.

CHECK MY BENEFITS TOOL DESCRIPTION

Check My Benefits is designed so that anyone with access to a computer with an Internet connection can view basic information about his/her benefit status. Applicants and recipients will be able to check information about FS, MA, SC and CTS benefits. In the future, other programs and information may be added. For this first release of Check My Benefits, ACCESS will only include data extracted from CARES. It does not include data from MMIS or EBT databases at this time.

ACCESS will provide case specific information such as:

- Detailed information about eligibility.
- When necessary, a list of items that the recipient needs to verify.
- Messages about recent changes in benefits.
- Denial or closure reason information.

In addition, recipients will have the option of viewing general, non-personalized “Common Questions.” As with the self-assessment tool, each page of the Check My Benefits will also include a separate window with help information.

New Access Home page

YOU ARE ON WISCONSIN.GOV

ACCESS

State of W I S C O N S I N

[Home](#) | [Check My Benefits](#) | [Am I Eligible?](#) | [Apply For Benefits](#) | [Common Questions](#) | [Other Resources](#)

Wednesday September 7, 2005

Welcome

Welcome to ACCESS!

ACCESS is a quick and easy way for people in Wisconsin to get answers to questions about health and nutrition programs. Please click on a picture below to choose the tool you would like to use.

To avoid errors when using ACCESS, please do not use the Forward, Back or Stop buttons on your browser. Instead, click on the ACCESS pictures and links to move from page to page.

Am I Eligible



Am I Eligible?

Click on the picture to see if you might be eligible for FoodShare, Medicaid, BadgerCare, SeniorCare, and other programs.

Check My Benefits



Check My Benefits

Use this tool to check the status of your FoodShare, Medicaid, BadgerCare, SeniorCare and Caretaker Supplement benefits. Click on the picture to create a secure MyACCESS account and log in to check your benefits.

Apply For Benefits



Apply for Benefits

Starting in April 2006, you can apply online for FoodShare, BadgerCare and Medicaid for families. Until then, use the "Am I Eligible?" tool to find out how to get help from these and other programs.

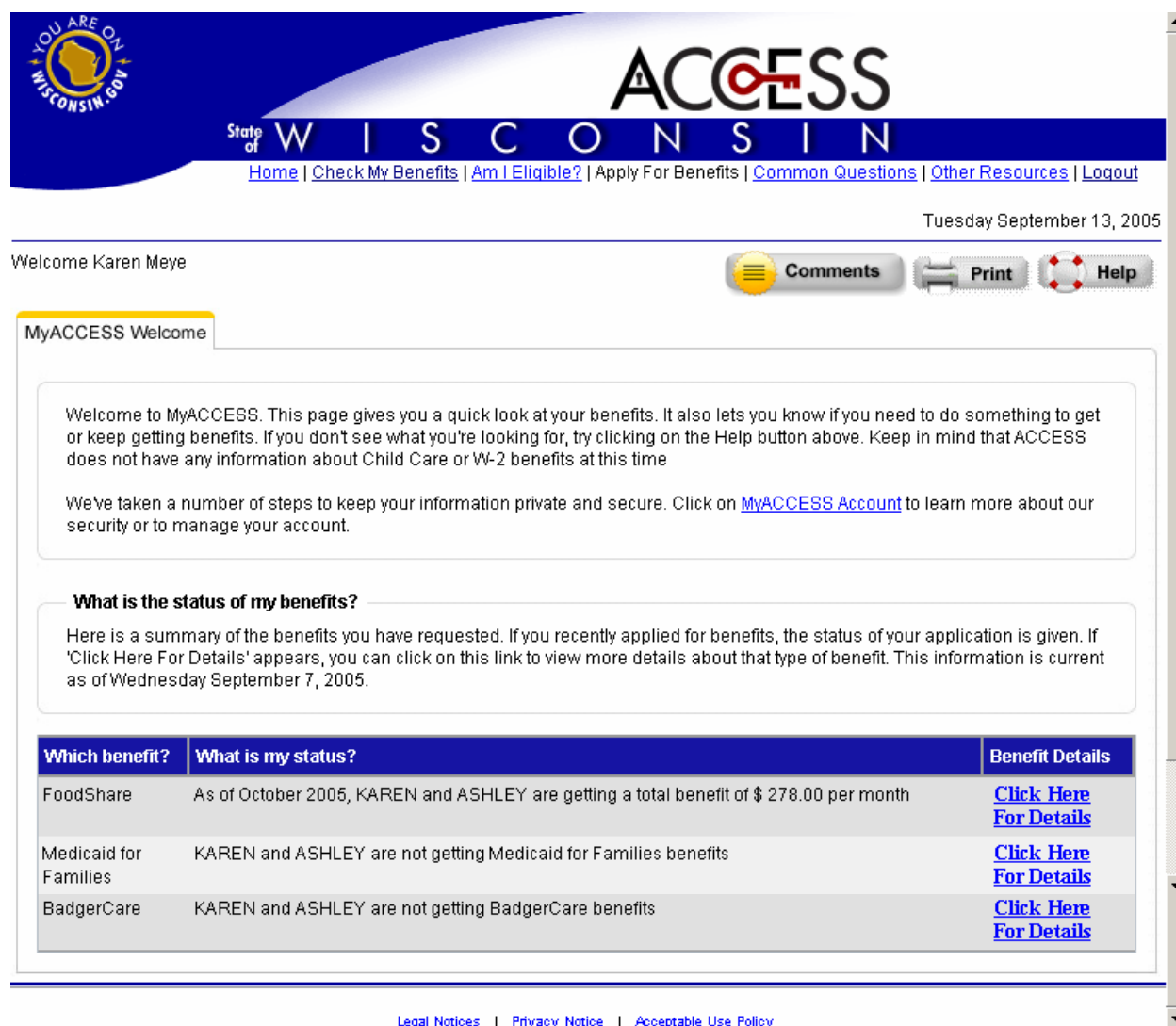
Common Questions



Common Questions

Do you have a general question about FoodShare, Medicaid, BadgerCare, SeniorCare or Caretaker Supplement? Click on the picture to look for the answer to your question.

Check My Benefits



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ACCESS

State of W I S C O N S I N

[Home](#) | [Check My Benefits](#) | [Am I Eligible?](#) | [Apply For Benefits](#) | [Common Questions](#) | [Other Resources](#) | [Logout](#)

Tuesday September 13, 2005

Welcome Karen Meyer

[Comments](#) [Print](#) [Help](#)

MyACCESS Welcome

Welcome to MyACCESS. This page gives you a quick look at your benefits. It also lets you know if you need to do something to get or keep getting benefits. If you don't see what you're looking for, try clicking on the Help button above. Keep in mind that ACCESS does not have any information about Child Care or W-2 benefits at this time.

We've taken a number of steps to keep your information private and secure. Click on [MyACCESS Account](#) to learn more about our security or to manage your account.

What is the status of my benefits?

Here is a summary of the benefits you have requested. If you recently applied for benefits, the status of your application is given. If 'Click Here For Details' appears, you can click on this link to view more details about that type of benefit. This information is current as of Wednesday September 7, 2005.

Which benefit?	What is my status?	Benefit Details
FoodShare	As of October 2005, KAREN and ASHLEY are getting a total benefit of \$ 278.00 per month	Click Here For Details
Medicaid for Families	KAREN and ASHLEY are not getting Medicaid for Families benefits	Click Here For Details
BadgerCare	KAREN and ASHLEY are not getting BadgerCare benefits	Click Here For Details

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SECURITY PROTOCOLS FOR CHECK MY BENEFITS

In order to create an account, customers are required to create their own unique user name and password, and provide their Social Security Number (SSN) and date of birth.

If a customer wants to view detailed case information, he or she will need to provide either his/her case number or his/her MA ID number. In the near future, customers will also be able to provide their QUEST card number. If the customer is not known to CARES, he or she will not be able to create an ACCESS account. Once a customer has provided that personal information, ACCESS will create an account.

To ensure confidentiality of case information, there will be three levels of data access for Check My Benefits:

- **Full viewing individuals.** Primary person and his/her spouse are considered to be "full-viewing" individuals. They will be allowed to:
 - See the status of an outstanding Request For Assistance (RFA)

- See all information for their case, including failure reasons for people who applied as part of that case
 - See their current mailing address
 - End Case Access through ACCESS for themselves and the other people on the case. (See “Ending Case Access” below)
 - **Targeted viewing individuals.** Adults who are on a case but are not the primary person or primary person’s spouse are known as “targeted viewing” individuals. They will be able to see their own, individual benefit information for benefits they have requested.
 - For example: this person would see his/her own failure reason for MA, if s/he requested MA, but not the MA information for a group that is eligible as part of the case.
 - For example: this person would see FS information for a FS unit s/he is a part of.
- NOTE ➤** If a full-viewing individual is coded as “out of the home” (CARES code <15>), s/he will become a targeted viewing individual. A targeted viewing individual cannot view the primary person’s mailing address or end case access. A person can be a full viewing individual on one case and a targeted viewing individual on another case.
- **No ability to view data.** Persons who are not known to CARES and minors who are not the primary person or primary person’s spouse, will not be able to create an ACCESS account. In addition, confidential cases and cases in which access via Check My Benefits has been ended cannot be viewed.

End Case Access

In very rare cases, after establishing an account, some people may not want any of their information to be available through ACCESS. In these rare cases, full viewing individuals may choose to “End Case Access” through Check My Benefits. This means that no one on the case, including that individual, can see his/her case information through ACCESS. Only full viewing individuals can take this step.

ACCESS customers should only end case access if they have serious concerns about someone being able to use their SSN, date of birth, and case information to log into ACCESS without their permission. If someone changes his/her mind later, the following process will have to take place to regain an ACCESS account:

1. The customer sees a worker and provides proof of ID,
2. Worker asks the local CARES coordinator to send an email to the CARES Call Center requesting that viewing privilege be restored,
3. CARES Call center will forward the request to appropriate BEM technical support staff to restore the viewing privilege, and
4. DHFS will send notification to the customer when access to Check My Benefits is restored.

DETAILED INFORMATION ABOUT ACCESS

A new ACCESS Handbook has been developed to help you understand how ACCESS Check My Benefits will work for you and your customers. The new handbook, found at:

<http://www.emhandbooks.wi.gov/ah/> (after September 29, 2005), works the same as the MEH

and FSH and will give you detailed information, including screen shots, of each of the important components of the Check My Benefits Process.

MATERIALS FOR CHECK MY BENEFITS

DHFS will be publishing small referral cards for workers to give to customers to let them know about Check My Benefits. These cards will be available for order after ACCESS is modified to allow customers to use their QUEST Card number to create an account (see above for details). DHFS is also planning to include information about Check My Benefits in client notices.

CUSTOMER SUPPORT

Starting later this fall, customers will be directed to call the Recipient Services Hotline for answers to questions about creating an account and using Check My Benefits.

Workers who experience technical problems with Check My Benefits should contact their CARES Coordinator, who will contact the Call Center.

CONTACTS

Autumn Arnold
BHCE/DHCF/DHFS
(608)266-0157
Arnolad@dhfs.state.wi.us

★Program Categories – FS – Food Stamps, MA – Medicaid, SC – Senior Care, CTS – Caretaker Supplement, CC – Child Care, W-2 – Wisconsin Works, FSET – Food Stamp Employment and Training, CF – Children First, EA – Emergency Assistance, JAL – Job Access Loan, JC - Job Center Programs, RAP – Refugee Assistance Program, WtW – Welfare to Work, WIA – Workforce Investment Act, Other EP – Other Employment Programs.